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## ROSALIND AND HELEN.

Edited, with notes, by H. Buxton Forman,  
and printed for private distribution.

MDCCCLXXVI.

[*Rosalind and Helen*, &c., of which the original title-page is given opposite, is a thin octavo volume, printed in the spring of 1819, and consisting of fly-title *Rosalind and Helen*, title-page, 2 pages of preface (called "advertisement"), contents, fly-title *Rosalind and Helen, a Modern Eclogue*, and text pp. 3 to 92. On the back of the first fly-title are advertisements of *The Revolt of Islam* and *Alastor*, and also an imprint, "C. H. REYNELL, Broad-street, Golden-square, London." At the end of the book are four pages of Ollier's advertisements,—of works by Lamb, Hunt, Shelley, Barry Cornwall, and Ollier. The fly-titles and contents, I insert in their places. In a letter to his publisher, dated "Leghorn, September 6th, 1819," Shelley says—"In the *Rosalind and Helen*, I see there are some few errors, which are so much the worse because they are errors in the sense. If there should be any danger of a second edition, I will correct them."—(*Shelley Memorials*, p. 119.) Whether he revised a copy, and, if so, whether Mrs. Shelley subsequently made use of it for her edition, I have no positive knowledge; but I do not discover in the variations between her text and his any trace of such a copy, and therefore think she left these "errors in the sense" uncorrected. As far as I am aware no entire MS. of *Rosalind and Helen* exists; but Mr. Garnett tells me of a fragment, written in pencil in a note-book, among Sir Percy Shelley's MSS.,—the conclusion of the poem,—presenting no variation from the printed text. Of the other three poems in the *Rosalind and Helen* volume, the only MSS. I know of are Sir Percy Shelley's pencil draft of the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, the variations shewn by which, communicated to me by Mr. Garnett, belong to an early stage of the composition,—and Mr. Locker's MS. of the interpolated passage relating to Byron in the *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*.—H. B. F.]

ROSALIND AND HELEN,

A MODERN ECLOGUE;

WITH

OTHER POEMS :

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. AND J. OLLIER,

VERE STREET, BOND STREET.

1819.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

[BY SHELLEY.]

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THE story of "Rosalind and Helen" is, undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry.<sup>1</sup> It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation; and if, by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awaken a certain ideal melancholy favourable to the reception of more important impressions, it will produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I wrote, to the impulse of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story; and this

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Shelley tells us that *Rosalind and Helen* was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside till she found it, when, at her request, Shelley finished it at the Baths of Lucca in the Summer of 1818; and Lady Shelley (*Memorials*, p. 87) says that a large part of it was written in 1817 (when the Shelley's lived at Marlow); but it is not stated whether this was in the Spring or Winter,—before or after the composition of *Laon and Cythna*, which occupied the summer and autumn. The lapse of many eventful months may account for some of the inconsistencies in detail; and the fact that Shelley had to be urged to finish it at all shews how little he prized it, and how little, therefore, he would have been likely to bring it up to any high degree of finish. In a letter to Peacock,

written from Rome on the 6th of April 1819, while this Eclogue was being printed, the poet, after enquiring with some anxiety after the safety of his *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*, says of *Rosalind and Helen*, "I lay no stress on it one way or the other." On the whole, therefore, I should imagine that it was hastily written with the full knowledge that such was the case, and that Shelley deliberately declined to reduce it to perfection of detail, however willing to correct "errors in the sense". If so, to attempt to make good the omission of rhymes and so on is simply to invade the poem with rash assistance, and forget the fate of Uzza. The very imperfections have a value; and the great beauty of passages in every page becomes the more wonderful.

impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it.

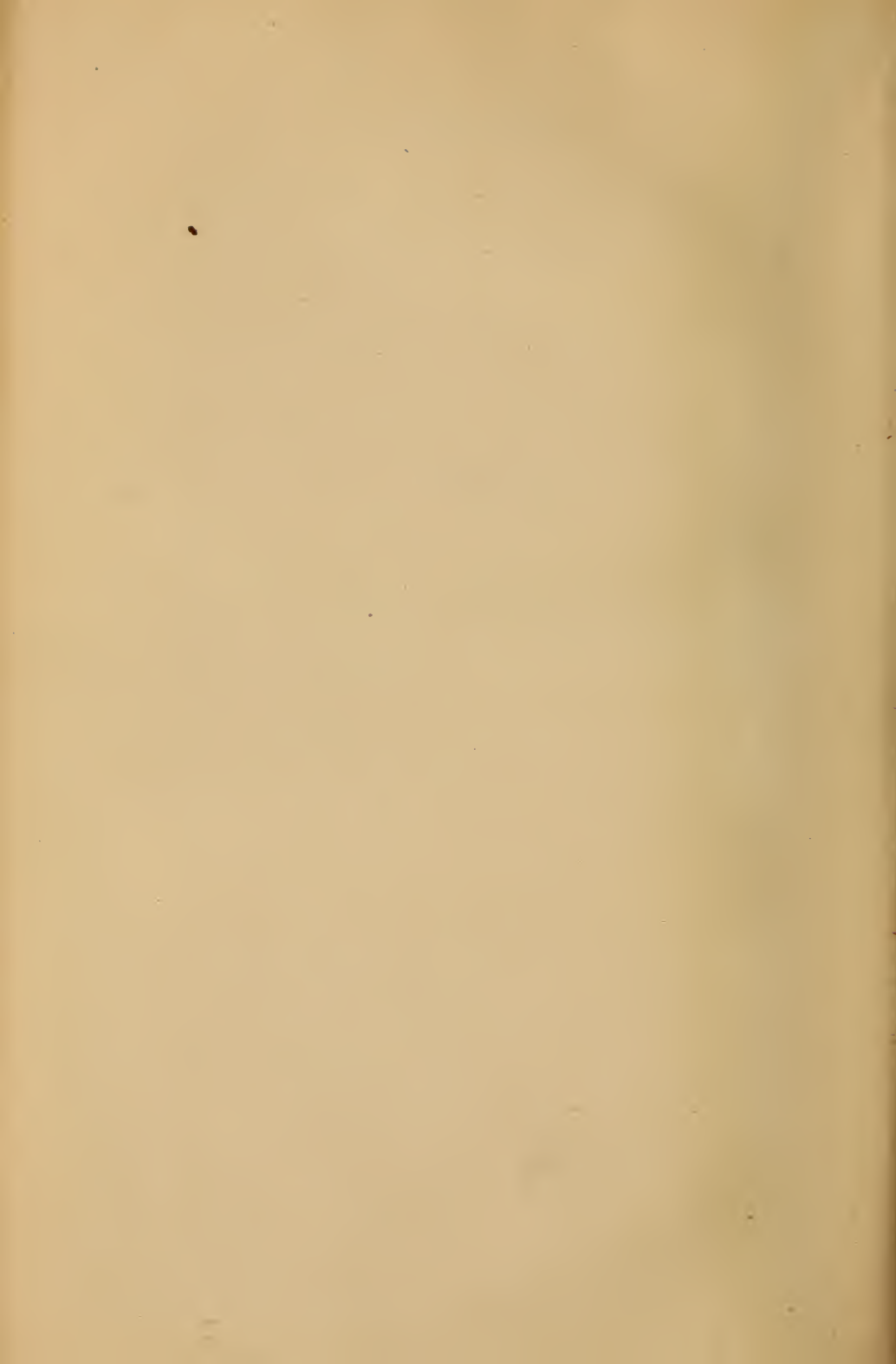
I do not know which of the few scattered poems I left in England will be selected by my bookseller, to add to this collection. One, which I sent from Italy, was written after a day's excursion among those lovely mountains which surround what was once the retreat, and where is now the sepulchre, of Petrarch. If any one is inclined to condemn the insertion of the introductory lines, which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn on the highest peak of those delightful mountains, I can only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.

*Naples, Dec. 20, 1818.*



## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Rosalind and Helen .....	11
Lines written on the Euganean Hills .....	54
Hymn to Intellectual Beauty .....	67
Sonnet .....	72



ROSALIND AND HELEN,

A

MODERN ECLOGUE.



## ROSALIND AND HELEN.

---

*Rosalind, Helen and her Child.*

*Scene, the Shore of the Lake of Como.*

HELEN.

COME hither, my sweet Rosalind.

'Tis long since thou and I have met ;

And yet methinks it were unkind

Those moments to forget.

Come sit by me. I see thee stand

5

By this lone lake, in this far land,

Thy loose hair in the light wind flying,

Thy sweet voice to each tone of even

United, and thine eyes replying

To the hues of yon fair heaven.

10

Come, gentle friend : wilt sit by me ?

And be as thou wert wont to be

Ere we were disunited ?

None doth behold us now : the power

That led us forth at this lone hour

15

Will be but ill requited

If thou depart in scorn : oh ! come,

And talk of our abandoned home.

Remember, this is Italy,

And we are exiles. Talk with me

20

Of that our land, whose wilds and floods,

Barren and dark although they be,  
Were dearer than these chesnut woods :  
Those heathy paths, that inland stream,  
And the blue mountains, shapes which seem 25  
Like wrecks of childhood's sunny dream :  
Which that we have abandoned now,  
Weighs on the heart like that remorse  
Which altered friendship leaves. I seek  
No more our youthful intercourse. 30  
That cannot be ! Rosalind, speak,  
Speak to me. Leave me not.—When morn did come,  
When evening fell upon our common home,  
When for one hour we parted,—do not frown :  
I would not chide thee, though thy faith is broken : 35  
But turn to me. Oh ! by this cherished token,  
Of woven hair, which thou wilt not disown,  
Turn, as 'twere but the memory of me,  
And not my scornèd self who prayed to thee.

## ROSALIND.

Is it a dream, or do I see 40  
And hear frail Helen ? I would flee  
Thy tainting touch ; but former years  
Arise, and bring forbidden tears ;  
And my o'erburthened memory  
Seeks yet its lost repose in thee. 45  
I share thy crime. I cannot choose  
But weep for thee : mine own strange grief  
But seldom stoops to such relief :  
Nor ever did I love thee less,  
Though mourning o'er thy wickedness 50  
Even with a sister's woe. I knew  
What to the evil world is due,  
And therefore sternly did refuse  
To link me with the infamy

Of one so lost as Helen. Now 55  
 Bewildered by my dire despair,  
 Wondering I blush, and weep that thou  
 Should'st love me still,—thou only!—There,  
 Let us sit on that grey stone,  
 Till our mournful talk be done. 60

HELEN.

Alas! not there; I cannot bear  
 The murmur of this lake to hear.  
 A sound from there,<sup>1</sup> Rosalind dear,  
 Which never yet I heard elsewhere  
 But in our native land, recurs, 65  
 Even here where now we meet. It stirs  
 Too much of suffocating sorrow!  
 In the dell of yon dark chesnut wood  
 Is a stone seat, a solitude  
 Less like our own. The ghost of peace 70  
 Will not desert this spot. To-morrow,  
 If thy kind feelings should not cease,  
 We may sit here.

ROSALIND.

Thou lead, my sweet,  
 And I will follow.

HENRY.

'Tis Fenici's seat  
 Where you are going? This is not the way, 75  
 Mamma; it leads behind those trees that grow  
 Close to the little river.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rossetti is doubtless right in thinking *thee* a misprint for *there*; and I adopt this fearlessly as one of the corrections Shelley would have made for a "second edition." The

sound so painful to Helen is of course "the murmur of the lake," reminding her of the wash of the waves round the fane where Lionel had died: see line 1049, p. 44, *et seq.*

HELEN.

Yes : I know :

I was bewildered. Kiss me, and be gay,  
 Dear boy : why do you sob ?

HENRY.

I do not know :

But it might break any one's heart to see 80  
 You and the lady cry so bitterly.

HELEN.

It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home,  
 Henry, and play with Lilla till I come.  
 We only cried with joy to see each other ;  
 We are quite merry now : Good night.

The boy 85

Lifted a sudden look upon his mother,  
 And in the gleam of forced and hollow joy  
 Which lightened o'er her face, laughed with the glee  
 Of light and unsuspecting infancy,  
 And whispered in her ear, " Bring home with you 90  
 That sweet strange lady-friend." Then off he flew,  
 But stopt, and beckoned with a meaning smile,  
 Where the road turned. Pale Rosalind the while,  
 Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way 95  
 Beneath the forest's solitude.

It was a vast and antique wood,  
 Thro' which they took their way ;  
 And the grey shades of evening  
 O'er that green wilderness did fling 100  
 Still deeper solitude.



Pursuing still the path that wound  
The vast and knotted trees around  
Thro' which slow shades were wandering,  
To a deep lawny dell they came, 105  
To a stone seat beside a spring,  
O'er which the columned wood did frame  
A roofless temple, like the fane  
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,  
Man's early race once knelt beneath 110  
The overhanging deity.  
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,  
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,  
The pale snake, that with eager breath  
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake, 115  
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,  
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,  
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood  
In the light of his own loveliness ;  
And the birds that in the fountain dip 120  
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship  
Above and round him wheel and hover.  
The fitful wind is heard to stir  
One solitary leaf on high ;  
The chirping of the grasshopper 125  
Fills every pause. There is emotion  
In all that dwells at noontide here :  
Then, thro' the intricate wild wood,  
A maze of life and light and motion  
Is woven. But there is stillness now : 130  
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now :  
The snake is in his cave asleep ;  
The birds are on the branches dreaming :  
Only the shadows creep :  
Only the glow-worm is gleaming : 135  
Only the owls and the nightingales

Wake in this dell when day-light fails,  
 And grey shades gather in the woods :  
 And the owls have all fled far away  
 In a merrier glen to hoot and play, 140  
 For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.  
 The accustomed nightingale still broods  
 On her accustomed bough,  
 But she is mute ; for her false mate  
 Has fled and left her desolate. 145

This silent spot tradition old  
 Had peopled with the spectral dead.  
 For the roots of the speaker's hair felt cold  
 And stiff, as with tremulous lips he told  
 That a hellish shape at midnight led 150  
 The ghost of a youth with hoary hair,  
 And sate on the seat beside him there,  
 Till a naked child came wandering by,  
 When the fiend would change to a lady fair !  
 A fearful tale ! The truth was worse : 155  
 For here a sister and a brother  
 Had solemnized a monstrous curse,  
 Meeting in this fair solitude :  
 For beneath yon very sky,  
 Had they resigned to one another 160  
 Body and soul. The multitude,  
 Tracking them to the secret wood,  
 Tore limb from limb their innocent child,  
 And stabbed and trampled on it's mother ;  
 But the youth, for God's most holy grace, 165  
 A priest saved to burn in the market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came  
 To this lone silent spot,  
 From the wrecks of a tale of wilder sorrow

So much of sympathy to borrow 170  
 As soothed her own dark lot.  
 Duly each evening from her home,  
 With her fair child would Helen come  
 To sit upon that antique seat,  
 While the hues of day were pale ; 175  
 And the bright boy beside her feet  
 Now lay, lifting at intervals  
 His broad blue eyes on her ;  
 Now, where some sudden impulse calls  
 Following.<sup>1</sup> He was a gentle boy 180  
 And in all gentle sports took joy ;  
 Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,  
 With a small feather for a sail,  
 His fancy on that spring would float,  
 If some invisible breeze might stir 185  
 It's marble calm : and Helen smiled  
 Thro' tears of awe on the gay child,  
 To think that a boy as fair as he,  
 In years which never more may be,  
 By that same fount, in that same wood, 190  
 The like sweet fancies had pursued ;  
 And that a mother, lost like her,  
 Had mournfully sate watching him.  
 Then all the scene was wont to swim  
 Through the mist of a burning tear. 195

For many months had Helen known  
 This scene ; and now she thither turned  
 Her footsteps, not alone.  
 The friend whose falsehood she had mourned,  
 Sate with her on that seat of stone. 200  
 Silent they sate ; for evening,

<sup>1</sup> This word is printed *followed* by any profession of supposing that Mr. Rossetti, though he does not make Shelley wrote it so.

And the power it's glimpses bring  
 Had, with one awful shadow, quelled  
 The passion of their grief. They sate  
 With linkèd hands, for unrepelled 205  
 Had Helen taken Rosalind's.  
 Like the autumn wind, when it unbinds  
 The tangled locks of the nightshade's hair,  
 Which is twined in the sultry summer air  
 Round the walls of an outworn sepulchre, 210  
 Did the voice of Helen, sad and sweet,  
 And the sound of her heart that ever beat,  
 As with sighs and words she breathed on her,  
 Unbind the knots of her friend's despair,  
 Till her thoughts were free to float and flow ; 215  
 And from her labouring bosom now,  
 Like the bursting of a prisoned flame,  
 The voice of a long pent sorrow came.

## ROSALIND.

I saw the dark earth fall upon  
 The coffin ; and I saw the stone 220  
 Laid over him whom this cold breast  
 Had pillowed to his nightly rest !  
 Thou knowest not, thou canst<sup>1</sup> not know  
 My agony. Oh ! I could not weep :  
 The sources whence such blessings flow 225  
 Were not to be approached by me !  
 But I could smile, and I could sleep,  
 Though with a self-accusing heart.  
 In morning's light, in evening's gloom,  
 I watched,—and would not thence depart—<sup>2</sup> 230

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, *can't*st.

<sup>2</sup> The consistency of this with other statements is not a matter of much importance ; but Rosalind does not keep her promise (line 248, p. 19) of telling the truth ; for further on she

says she went straight away on hearing the will (line 523 *et seq.*, p. 28),—an inaccuracy probably incidental to the interruption of the work. See note 1, p. 5.

My husband's unlamented tomb.  
 My children knew their sire was gone,  
 But when I told them,—‘he is dead,’—  
 They laughed aloud in frantic glee,  
 They clapped their hands and leaped about, 235  
 Answering each other's ecstasy<sup>1</sup>  
 With many a prank and merry shout.  
 But I sat<sup>2</sup> silent and alone,  
 Wrapped in the mock of mourning weed.

They laughed, for he was dead: but I 240  
 Sate with a hard and tearless eye,  
 And with a heart which would deny.  
 The secret joy it could not quell,  
 Low muttering o'er his loathèd name;  
 Till from that self-contention came 245  
 Remorse where sin was none; a hell  
 Which in pure spirits should not dwell.

I'll tell thee truth. He was a man  
 Hard, selfish, loving only gold,  
 Yet full of guile: his pale eyes ran 250  
 With tears, which each some falsehood told,  
 And oft his smooth and bridled tongue  
 Would give the lie to his flushing cheek:  
 He was a coward to the strong:  
 He was a tyrant to the weak, 255  
 On whom his vengeance he would wreak:  
 For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,  
 From many a stranger's eye would dart,  
 And on his memory cling, and follow  
 His soul to it's home so cold and hollow. 260

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, *ecstasy*.

<sup>2</sup> So in all authoritative editions from Shelley's onwards; but whether *sat* was used here, and *sate* throughout

the poem elsewhere, advisedly, it is bootless to guess. It certainly sounds better in this particular place; but I think it often would, where *sate* is used.

He was a tyrant to the weak,  
 And we were such, alas the day!  
 Oft, when my little ones at play,  
 Were in youth's natural lightness gay,  
 Or if they listened to some tale 265  
 Of travellers, or of fairy land,—  
 When the light from the wood-fire's dying brand  
 Flashed on their faces,—if they heard  
 Or thought they heard upon the stair  
 His footstep, the suspended word 270  
 Died on my lips : we all grew pale :  
 The babe at my bosom was hushed with fear  
 If it thought it heard its father near ;  
 And my two wild boys would near my knee  
 Cling, cowed and cowering fearfully. 275

I'll tell thee truth : I loved another.  
 His name in my ear was ever ringing,  
 His form to my brain was ever clinging :  
 Yet if some stranger breathed that name,  
 My lips turned white, and my heart beat fast : 280  
 My nights were once haunted by dreams of flame,  
 My days were dim in the shadow cast<sup>1</sup>  
 By the memory of the same !  
 Day and night, day and night,  
 He was my breath and life and light, 285  
 For three short years, which soon were past.  
 On<sup>2</sup> the fourth, my gentle mother  
 Led me to the shrine, to be  
 His sworn bride eternally.

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions, there is a comma at *cast*.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Rossetti reads *In*, and suggests "printer's error" as the explanation of *On*. I think *on* is the preposition of Shelley's choice, and that he meant to

make use of an elliptical construction,—"On the dawn or coming of the fourth." *In* would be very vague ; and I do not see that it has any but a pedagogic advantage over *on*, if even it has that.



And<sup>1</sup> now we stood on the altar stair, 290  
 When my father came from a distant land,  
 And with a loud and fearful cry  
 Rushed between us suddenly.

I saw the stream of his thin grey hair,  
 I saw his lean and lifted hand, 295  
 And heard his words,—and live! Oh God!  
 Wherefore do I live?—‘Hold, hold!’

He cried,—‘I tell thee ’tis her brother!  
 Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod  
 Of yon church-yard rests in her shroud so cold: 300

I am now weak, and pale, and old:  
 We were once dear to one another,  
 I and that corpse! Thou art our child!’

Then with a laugh both long and wild  
 The youth upon the pavement fell: 305

They found him dead! All looked on me,  
 The spasms of my despair to see:

But I was calm. I went away:  
 I was clammy-cold like clay!  
 I did not weep: I did not speak: 310

But day by day, week after week,  
 I walked about like a corpse alive!  
 Alas! sweet friend, you must believe  
 This heart is stone: it did not break.

My father lived a little while, 315

But all might see that he was dying,  
 He smiled with such a woful smile!

When he was in the church-yard lying  
 Among the worms, we grew quite poor,  
 So that no one would give us bread: 320

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition there are unmeaning inverted commas before this word, and none elsewhere to correspond

with them,—possibly the printer's interpretation of some mark meant to indicate a new paragraph.

My mother looked at me, and said  
 Faint words of cheer, which only meant  
 That she could die and be content ;  
 So I went forth from the same church door  
 To another husband's bed. 325  
 And this was he who died at last,  
 When weeks and months and years had past,  
 Through which I firmly did fulfil  
 My duties, a devoted wife,  
 With the stern step of vanquished will, 330  
 Walking beneath the night of life,  
 Whose hours extinguished, like slow rain  
 Falling for ever, pain by pain,  
 The very hope of death's dear rest ;  
 Which, since the heart within my breast 335  
 Of natural life was dispossessed,  
 It's strange sustainer there had been.

When flowers were dead, and grass was green  
 Upon my mother's grave,—that mother  
 Whom to outlive, and cheer, and make 340  
 My wan eyes glitter for her sake,  
 Was my vowed task, the single care  
 Which once gave life to my despair,—  
 When she was a thing that did not stir  
 And the crawling worms were cradling her 345  
 To a sleep more deep and so more sweet  
 Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's knee,  
 I lived: a living pulse then beat  
 Beneath my heart that awakened me.  
 What was this pulse so warm and free ? 350  
 Alas ! I knew it could not be  
 My own dull blood: 'twas like a thought  
 Of liquid love, that spread and wrought  
 Under my bosom and in my brain,



And crept with the blood through every vein ; 355  
 And hour by hour, day after day,  
 The wonder could not charm away,  
 But laid in sleep, my wakeful pain,  
 Until I knew it was a child,  
 And then I wept. For long, long years 360  
 These frozen eyes had shed no tears :  
 But now—'twas the season fair and mild  
 When April has wept itself to May :  
 I sate through the sweet sunny day  
 By my window bowered round with leaves, 365  
 And down my cheeks the quick tears ran<sup>1</sup>  
 Like twinkling rain-drops from the eaves,  
 When warm spring showers are passing o'er :  
 O Helen, none can ever tell  
 The joy it was to weep once more ! 370

I wept to think how hard it were  
 To kill my babe, and take from it  
 The sense of light, and the warm air,  
 And my own fond and tender care,  
 And love and smiles ; ere I knew yet 375  
 That these for it might, as for me,  
 Be the masks of a grinning mockery.  
 And haply, I would dream, 'twere sweet  
 To feed it from my faded breast,  
 Or mark my own heart's restless beat 380  
 Rock it to its untroubled rest,  
 And watch the growing soul beneath  
 Dawn in faint smiles ; and hear its breath,  
 Half interrupted by calm sighs,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rossetti prints *fell* for *ran*,  
 so as to get a rhyme for *tell*. It is  
 certainly more correct to say tears run  
 down the cheeks than fall down the  
 cheeks ; and the alteration is very in-

secure. It should be noted that the  
 ensuing simile is somewhat loose, inas-  
 much as rain-drops *from the eaves* do  
 not either fall down anything or run  
 down anything, but *through* the air.

And search the depth of its fair eyes 385  
 For long departed memories !  
 And so I lived till that sweet load  
 Was lightened. Darkly forward flowed  
 The stream of years, and on it bore  
 Two shapes of gladness to my sight ; 390  
 Two other babes, delightful more  
 In my lost soul's abandoned night,  
 Than their own country ships may be  
 Sailing towards wrecked mariners,  
 Who cling to the rock of a wintry sea. 395  
 For each, as it came, brought soothing tears,  
 And a loosening warmth, as each one lay  
 Sucking the sullen milk away  
 About my frozen heart, did play,  
 And weaned it, oh how painfully !— 400  
 As they themselves were weaned each one  
 From that sweet food,—even from the thirst  
 Of death, and nothingness, and rest,  
 Strange inmate of a living breast !  
 Which all that I had undergone<sup>1</sup> 405  
 Of grief and shame, since she, who first  
 The gates of that dark refuge closed,  
 Came to my sight, and almost burst  
 The seal of that Lethean spring ;  
 But these fair shadows interposed : 410

<sup>1</sup> There is probably either corruption in the line "which all that I had undergone," or a hiatus after "The seal of that Lethean spring." If the latter, then the incompleted sense is that each child, as it came, weaned Rosalind from the thirst of death,—that the first child not only closed the gate through which the mother looked towards "that dark refuge," but also almost burst the seal of the fountain of forgetfulness,—that then came fresh grief and shame, reimposing (but this

is where the sense is incomplete) the thirst of death, to slake which "these fair shadows" (the remembered other children) interposed. It is conceivable, however, that there is neither corruption nor hiatus, but just that simple measure of laxity which Shelley allowed himself in this, perhaps the laxest of his mature poems in regard to diction and metre. If that be so, then he uses the word *interposed* in a strained and transitive sense ; and the meaning would be "all that I had

For all delights are shadows now!  
And from my brain to my dull brow  
The heavy tears gather and flow:  
I cannot speak: Oh let me weep!

The tears which fell from her wan eyes 415  
Glimmered among the moonlight dew:  
Her deep hard sobs and heavy sighs  
Their echoes in the darkness threw.  
When she grew calm, she thus did keep  
The tenor of her tale:

He died: 420

I know not how: he was not old,  
If age be numbered by its years:  
But he was bowed and bent with fears,  
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,  
Which, like fierce fever, left him weak; 425  
And his strait lip and bloated cheek  
Were warped in spasms by hollow sneers;  
And selfish cares with barren plough,  
Not age, had lined his narrow brow,  
And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed 430  
Upon the withering life within,  
Like vipers on some poisonous weed.  
Whether his ill were death or sin  
None knew, until he died indeed,

undergone since the birth of my first child only admitted an interchange of places between the thirst of death and these fair shadows,"—*but* being then used in the sense of *only, alone*. It is, however, likely enough that this is one of the passages in which we are to look for those "errors in the sense" referred to in the letter to Mr. Ollier (see page 2). If it be so, I should suspect the word *which* in line 405, and the word *and* in line 408: among the commonest printer's errors are

*which* for *while*, and *and* for *had*; and, assuming those in this case, we get clear sense enough:

*While* all that I had undergone  
Of grief and shame, since she, who first  
The gates of that dark refuge closed,  
Came to my sight, *had* almost burst, &c.

Each new child, that is to say, weaned her from the thirst of death, while her sufferings, since the birth of the first, had almost burst the seal which that first had put upon the "Lethean spring" of death.

And then men owned they were the same. 435  
 Seven days within my chamber lay  
 That corse, and my babes made holiday :  
 At last, I told them what is death :  
 The eldest, with a kind of shame,  
 Came to my knees with silent breath, 440  
 And sate awe-stricken<sup>1</sup> at my feet ;  
 And soon the others left their play,  
 And sate there too. It is unmeet  
 To shed on the brief flower of youth  
 The withering knowledge of the grave ; 445  
 From me remorse then wrung that truth.  
 I could not bear the joy which gave  
 Too just a response to mine own.  
 In vain. I dared not feign a groan ;  
 And in their artless looks I saw, 450  
 Between the mists of fear and awe,  
 That my own thought was theirs ; and they  
 Expressed it not in words, but said,  
 Each in its heart, how every day  
 Will pass in happy work and play, 455  
 Now he is dead and gone away.

After the funeral all our kin  
 Assembled, and the will was read.  
 My friend, I tell thee, even the dead  
 Have strength, their putrid shrouds within, 460  
 To blast and torture. Those who live  
 Still fear the living, but a corse  
 Is merciless, and Power<sup>2</sup> doth give  
 To such pale tyrants half the spoil  
 He rends from those who groan and toil, 465  
 Because they blush not with remorse

<sup>1</sup> Mis-spelt *awe-stricken* in the original edition.

<sup>2</sup> *Power* is spelt with a small *p* in Shelley's edition.

Among their crawling worms. Behold,  
I have no child! my tale grows old  
With grief, and staggers: let it reach  
The limits of my feeble speech,  
And languidly at length recline  
On the brink of its own grave and mine.

470

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty  
Among the fallen on evil days:  
'Tis Crime, and Fear, and Infamy,  
And houseless Want in frozen ways  
Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,  
And, worse than all, that inward stain  
Foul Self-contempt, which drowns in sneers  
Youth's starlight smile, and makes its tears  
First like hot gall, then dry for ever!  
And well thou knowest a mother never  
Could doom her children to this ill,  
And well he knew the same. The will  
Imported, that if e'er again  
I sought my children to behold,  
Or in my birth-place did remain  
Beyond three days, whose hours were told,  
They should inherit nought: and he,  
To whom next came their patrimony,  
A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,  
Aye watched me, as the will was read,  
With eyes askance, which sought to see  
The secrets of my agony;  
And with close lips and anxious brow  
Stood canvassing still to and fro  
The chance of my resolve, and all  
The dead man's caution just did call;  
For in that killing lie 'twas said—  
"She is adulterous, and doth hold

475

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495

500

In secret that the Christian creed  
Is false, and therefore is much need  
That I should have a care to save  
My children from eternal fire."

Friend, he was sheltered by the grave,  
And therefore dared to be a liar!

505

In truth, the Indian on the pyre  
Of her dead husband, half consumed,  
As well might there be false, as I  
To those abhorred embraces doomed,  
Far worse than fire's brief agony.

510

As to the Christian creed, if true  
Or false, I never questioned it:

I took it as the vulgar do:

Nor my vexed soul had leisure yet  
To doubt the things men say, or deem  
That they are other than they seem.

515

All present who those crimes did hear,  
In feigned or actual scorn and fear,  
Men, women, children, slunk away,  
Whispering with self-contented pride,  
Which half suspects its own base lie.

520

I spoke to none, nor did abide,  
But silently I went my way,  
Nor noticed I where joyously

525

Sate my two younger babes at play,  
In the court-yard through which I past;  
But went with footsteps firm and fast  
Till I came to the brink of the ocean green,  
And there, a woman with grey hairs,  
Who had my mother's servant been,  
Kneeling, with many tears and prayers,  
Made me accept a purse of gold,  
Half of the earnings she had kept

530



To refuge her when weak and old. 535  
 With woe, which never sleeps or slept,  
 I wander now. 'Tis a vain thought—  
 But on yon alp, whose snowy head  
 'Mid the azure air is islanded,  
 (We see it o'er the flood of cloud, 540  
 Which sunrise from its eastern caves  
 Drives, wrinkling into golden waves,  
 Hung with its precipices proud,  
 From that grey stone where first we met)  
 There, now who knows the dead feel nought?<sup>1</sup> 545  
 Should be my grave; for he who yet  
 Is my soul's soul, once said: " 'Twere sweet  
 'Mid stars and lightnings to abide,  
 And winds and lulling snows, that beat  
 With their soft flakes the mountain wide, 550  
 When weary meteor lamps repose,  
 And languid storms their pinions close:  
 And all things strong and bright and pure,  
 And ever during, aye endure:  
 Who knows, if one were buried there, 555  
 But these things might our spirits make,  
 Amid the all-surrounding air,  
 Their own eternity partake?"  
 Then 'twas a wild and playful saying  
 At which I laughed, or seemed to laugh: 560  
 They were his words: now heed my praying,  
 And let them be my epitaph.  
 Thy memory for a term may be  
 My monument. Wilt remember me?  
 I know thou wilt, and canst forgive 565  
 Whilst in this erring world to live  
 My soul disdained not, that I thought

<sup>1</sup> This question is of course parenthetical, the main position being "There [that is to say, "on yon alp"] should be my grave."

Its lying forms were worthy aught  
And much less thee.

HELEN.

O speak not so,  
But come to me and pour thy woe 570  
Into this heart, full though it be,  
Aye overflowing with its own :  
I thought that grief had severed me  
From all beside who weep and groan ;  
Its likeness upon earth to be, 575  
Its express image ; but thou art  
More wretched. Sweet ! we will not part  
Henceforth, if death be not division ;  
If so, the dead feel no contrition.  
But wilt thou hear, since last we parted 580  
All that has left me broken hearted ?

ROSALIND.

Yes, speak. The faintest stars are scarcely shorn  
Of their thin beams by that delusive morn  
Which sinks again in darkness, like the light  
Of early love, soon lost in total night. 585

HELEN.

Alas ! Italian winds are mild,  
But my bosom is cold—wintry cold—  
When the warm air weaves, among the fresh leaves,  
Soft music, my poor brain is wild,  
And I am weak like a nursling child, 590  
Though my soul with grief is grey<sup>1</sup> and old.

ROSALIND.

Weep not at thine own words, though they must make  
Me weep. What is thy tale ?

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition *gray* in this instance, though elsewhere *grey*.



HELEN.

I fear 'twill shake

Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou well  
Rememberest when we met no more, 595  
And, though I dwelt with Lionel,  
That friendless caution pierced me sore  
With grief; a wound my spirit bore  
Indignantly, but when he died  
With him lay dead both hope and pride. 600

Alas! all hope is buried now.  
But then men dreamed the aged earth  
Was labouring in that mighty birth,  
Which many a poet and a sage  
Has aye foreseen—the happy age 605  
When truth and love shall dwell below  
Among the works and ways of men;  
Which on this world not power but will  
Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence befell<sup>1</sup> 610  
Of strife, how vain, is known too well;  
When liberty's dear pæan fell  
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,  
Though of great wealth and lineage high,  
Yet through those dungeon walls there came 615  
Thy thrilling light, O liberty!  
And as the meteor's midnight flame  
Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth  
Flashed on his visionary youth,  
And filled him, not with love, but faith, 620  
And hope, and courage mute in death;  
For love and life in him were twins,  
Born at one birth: in every other  
First life then love its course begins,

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, *befel*, as at p. 35.

Though they be children of one mother ; 625  
 And so through this dark world they fleet  
 Divided, till in death they meet :  
 But he loved all things ever. Then  
 He past amid the strife of men,  
 And stood at the throne of armèd power 630  
 Pleading for a world of woe :  
 Secure as one on a rock-built tower  
 O'er the wrecks which the surge trails to and fro,  
 'Mid the passions wild of human kind  
 He stood, like a spirit calming them ; 635  
 For, it was said, his words could bind  
 Like music the lulled crowd, and stem  
 That torrent of unquiet dream,  
 Which mortals truth and reason deem,  
 But is revenge and fear and pride. 640  
 Joyous he was ; and hope and peace  
 On all who heard him did abide,  
 Raining like dew from his sweet talk,  
 As where the evening star may walk  
 Along the brink of the gloomy seas, 645  
 Liquid mists of splendour quiver.  
 His very gestures touched to tears  
 The unpersuaded tyrant, never  
 So moved before : his presence stung  
 The torturers with their victim's pain,<sup>1</sup> 650  
 And none knew how ; and through their ears,  
 The subtle witchcraft of his tongue  
 Unlocked the hearts of those who keep  
 Gold, the world's bond of slavery.

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested, in order to get a kind of rhyme where none exists, that this line should be printed

With their victims' pain the torturers.  
 It would be very hazardous to print it so without manuscript authority ; and

it is quite open to question whether Shelley would have preferred inversion and a bad rhyme to directness and no rhyme, if he had had to make deliberate choice, in this or any other particular case.

Men wondered, and some sneered to see 655  
 One sow what he could never reap :  
 For he is rich, they said, and young,  
 And might drink from the depths of luxury.  
 If he seeks fame, fame never crowned  
 The champion of a trampled creed : 660  
 If he seeks power, power is enthroned  
 'Mid antient rights and wrongs, to feed  
 Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil,  
 Those who would sit near power must toil ;  
 And such, there sitting, all may see. 665  
 What seeks he ? All that others seek  
 He casts away, like a vile weed  
 Which the sea casts unreturningly.  
 That poor and hungry men should break  
 The laws which wreak them toil and scorn, 670  
 We understand ; but Lionel  
 We know is rich and nobly born.  
 So wondered they : yet all men loved  
 Young Lionel, though few approved ;  
 All but the priests, whose hatred fell 675  
 Like the unseen blight of a smiling day,  
 The withering honey dew, which clings  
 Under the bright green buds of May,  
 Whilst they unfold their emerald wings :  
 For he made verses wild and queer 680  
 On the strange creeds priests hold so dear,  
 Because they bring them land and gold.  
 Of devils and saints and all such gear,  
 He made tales which whoso heard or read  
 Would laugh till he were almost dead. 685  
 So this grew a proverb : " don't get old  
 Till Lionel's 'banquet in hell' you hear,  
 And then you will laugh yourself young again."  
 So the priests hated him, and he

Repaid their hate with cheerful glee.

690

Ah, smiles and joyance quickly died,  
 For public hope grew pale and dim  
 In an altered time and tide,  
 And in its wasting withered him,  
 As a summer flower that blows too soon  
 Droops in the smile of the waning moon,  
 When it scatters through an April night  
 The frozen dews of wrinkling blight.  
 None now hoped more. Grey Power was seated  
 Safely on her ancestral throne ;  
 And Faith, the Python, undefeated,  
 Even to its blood-stained steps dragged on  
 Her foul and wounded train, and men  
 Were trampled and deceived again,  
 And words and shews again could bind  
 The wailing tribes of human kind  
 In scorn and famine. Fire and blood  
 Raged round the raging multitude,  
 To fields remote by tyrants sent  
 To be the scornèd instrument  
 With which they drag from mines of gore  
 The chains their slaves yet ever wore :  
 And in the streets men met each other,  
 And by old altars and in halls,  
 And smiled again at festivals.  
 But each man found in his heart's brother  
 Cold cheer ; for all, though half deceived,  
 The outworn creeds again believed,  
 And the same round anew began,  
 Which the weary world yet ever ran.

695

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720

Many then wept, not tears, but gall  
 Within their hearts, like drops which fall

Wasting the fountain-stone away.  
 And in that dark and evil day  
 Did all desires and thoughts, that claim 725  
 Men's care—ambition, friendship, fame,  
 Love, hope, though hope was now despair—  
 Indue the colours of this change,  
 As from the all-surrounding air  
 The earth takes hues obscure and strange, 730  
 When storm and earthquake linger there.

And so, my friend, it then befell<sup>1</sup>  
 To many, most to Lionel,  
 Whose hope was like the life of youth  
 Within him, and when dead, became 735  
 A spirit of unresting flame,  
 Which goaded him in his distress  
 Over the world's vast wilderness.  
 Three years he left his native land,  
 And on<sup>2</sup> the fourth, when he returned, 740  
 None knew him : he was stricken<sup>3</sup> deep  
 With some disease of mind, and turned  
 Into aught unlike Lionel.  
 On him, on whom, did he pause in sleep,  
 Serenest smiles were wont to keep, 745  
 And, did he wake, a wingèd band  
 Of bright persuasions, which had fed  
 On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,  
 Kept their swift pinions half outspread,  
 To do on men his least command ; 750

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition we have again *befel* instead of *befell*, as at p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> The whole construction of this sentence, from *Three years*, is very loose; but I do not think there is any corruption. It is of course meant, not that he went away three times in as many years, but *for* three years.

"On the fourth, when he returned," I take to be elliptical for "On his return at the dawn or beginning of the fourth." Mr. Rossetti substitutes *in* for *on*. See note 2, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> In Shelley's edition, *stricken*, as at p. 26.

On him, whom once 'twas paradise  
 Even to behold, now misery lay :<sup>1</sup>  
 In his own heart 'twas merciless,  
 To all things else none may express  
 Its innocence and tenderness.

755

'Twas said that he had refuge sought  
 In love from his unquiet thought  
 In distant lands, and been deceived  
 By some strange shew ; for there were found,  
 Blotted with tears as those relieved  
 By their own words are wont to do,  
 These mournful verses on the ground,  
 By all who read them blotted too.

760

“How am I changed ! my hopes were once like fire :  
 I loved, and I believed that life was love.  
 How am I lost ! on wings of swift desire  
 Among Heaven's winds my spirit once did move.  
 I slept, and silver dreams did aye inspire  
 My liquid sleep : I woke, and did approve  
 All nature to my heart, and thought to make  
 A paradise of earth for one sweet sake.

765

770

“I love, but I believe in love no more.  
 I feel desire, but hope not. O, from sleep  
 Most vainly must my weary brain implore  
 Its long lost flattery now : I wake to weep,  
 And sit through the long day gnawing the core  
 Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep,  
 Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure,  
 To my own soul its self-consuming treasure.”

775

He dwelt beside me near the sea :  
 And oft in evening did we meet,

780

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rossetti suggests the substitution of *weighed* for *lay*.



When the waves, beneath the starlight, flee  
 O'er the yellow sands with silver feet,  
 And talked: our talk was sad and sweet,  
 Till slowly from his mien there passed 785  
 The desolation which it spoke;  
 And smiles,—as when the lightning's blast  
 Has parched some heaven-delighting oak,  
 The next spring shews leaves pale and rare,  
 But like flowers delicate and fair, 790  
 On its rent boughs,—again arrayed  
 His countenance in tender light:  
 His words grew subtile fire, which made  
 The air his hearers breathed delight:  
 His motions, like the winds, were free, 795  
 Which bend the bright grass gracefully,  
 Then fade away in circlets faint:  
 And wingèd hope, on which upborne  
 His soul seemed hovering in his eyes,  
 Like some bright spirit newly born 800  
 Floating amid the sunny skies,  
 Sprang forth from his rent heart anew.  
 Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and mien,  
 Tempering their loveliness too keen,  
 Past woe its shadow backward threw, 805  
 Till like an exhalation, spread  
 From flowers half drunk with evening dew,  
 They did become infectious: sweet  
 And subtile mists of sense and thought:  
 Which wrapt us soon, when we might meet, 810  
 Almost from our own looks and aught  
 The wide world holds. And so, his mind  
 Was healed, while mine grew sick with fear:  
 For ever now his health declined,  
 Like some frail bark which cannot bear 815  
 The impulse of an altered wind,

Though prosperous : and my heart grew full  
'Mid its new joy of a new care :  
For his cheek became, not pale, but fair,  
As rose-o'ershadowed lillies are ;  
'And soon his deep and sunny hair,  
In this alone less beautiful,  
Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare.  
The blood in his translucent veins  
Beat, not like animal life, but love  
Seemed now its sullen springs to move,  
When life had failed, and all its pains :  
And sudden sleep would seize him oft  
Like death, so calm, but that a tear,  
His pointed eye-lashes between,  
Would gather in the light serene  
Of smiles, whose lustre bright and soft  
Beneath lay undulating there.  
His breath was like inconstant flame,  
As eagerly it went and came ;  
And I hung o'er him in his sleep,  
Till, like an image in the lake  
Which rains disturb, my tears would break  
The shadow of that slumber deep :  
Then he would bid me not to weep,  
And say with flattery false, yet sweet,  
That death and he could never meet,  
If I would never part with him.  
And so we loved, and did unite  
All that in us was yet divided :  
For when he said, that many a rite,  
By men to bind but once provided,  
Could not be shared by him and me,  
Or they would kill him in their glee,  
I shuddered, and then laughing said—  
“ We will have rites our faith to bind,

820

825

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835

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845

850



But our church shall be the starry night,  
Our altar the grassy earth outspread,  
And our priest the muttering wind."

'Twas sunset as I spoke : one star 855  
Had scarce burst forth, when from afar  
The ministers of misrule sent,  
Seized upon Lionel, and bore  
His chained limbs to a dreary tower,  
In the midst of a city vast and wide. 860  
For he, they said, from his mind had bent  
Against their gods keen blasphemy,  
For which, though his soul must roasted be  
In hell's red lakes immortally,  
Yet even on earth must he abide 865  
The vengeance of their slaves : a trial,  
I think, men call it. What avail  
Are prayers and tears, which chase denial  
From the fierce savage, nursed in hate ?  
What the knit soul that pleading and pale 870  
Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late  
It painted with its own delight ?  
We were divided. As I could,  
I stilled the tingling of my blood,  
And followed him in their despite, 875  
As a widow follows, pale and wild,  
The murderers and corse of her only child ;  
And when we came to the prison door  
And I prayed to share his dungeon floor  
With prayers which rarely have been spurned, 880  
And when men drove me forth and I  
Stared with blank frenzy on the sky,  
A farewell look of love he turned,  
Half calming me ; then gazed awhile,  
As if thro' that black and massy pile, 885

And thro' the crowd around him there,  
 And thro' the dense and murky air,  
 And the thronged streets, he did espy  
 What poets know and prophesy;<sup>1</sup>  
 And said, with voice that made them shiver 890  
 And clung like music in my brain,  
 And which the mute walls spoke again  
 Prolonging it with deepened strain:  
 "Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever,  
 Or the priests of the bloody faith; 895  
 They stand on the brink of that mighty river,  
 Whose waves they have tainted with death:  
 It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,  
 Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,  
 And their swords and their sceptres I floating see, 900  
 Like wrecks in the surge of eternity."<sup>2</sup>

I dwelt beside the prison gate,  
 And the strange crowd that out and in  
 Passed, some, no doubt, with mine own fate,  
 Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din, 905  
 But the fever of care was louder within.  
 Soon, but too late, in penitence  
 Or fear, his foes released him thence:  
 I saw his thin and languid form,  
 As leaning on the jailor's arm, 910  
 Whose hardened eyes grew moist the while,  
 To meet his mute and faded smile,  
 And hear his words of kind farewell,  
 He tottered forth from his damp cell.

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition *prophecy*.

<sup>2</sup> This stanza occurs with some slight variations in the poem to William Shelley, written when Shelley feared the Lord Chancellor might seek to deprive him of that child also, after having taken away Charles and Ianthe. The variations are *will* for *shall* in

line 894, *evil* for *bloody* in line 895, *raging* for *mighty* in line 896, *depth* for *depths* in line 898; and line 899 has no commas in it in that version. In Shelley's edition there is a comma after *Fear not*, which Mrs. Shelley rightly omits both from *Rosalind and Helen* and from the poem to William.

Many had never wept before, 915  
 From whom fast tears then gushed and fell :  
 Many will relent no more,  
 Who sobbed like infants then : aye, all  
 Who thronged the prison's stony hall,  
 The rulers or the slaves of law, 920  
 Felt with a new surprise and awe  
 That they were human, till strong shame  
 Made them again become the same.  
 The prison blood-hounds, huge and grim,  
 From human looks the infection caught, 925  
 And fondly crouched and fawned on him ;  
 And men have heard the prisoners say,  
 Who in their rotting dungeons lay,  
 That from that hour, throughout one day,  
 The fierce despair and hate which kept 930  
 Their trampled bosoms almost slept,<sup>1</sup>  
 When, like twin vultures, they hung feeding  
 On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding,  
 Because their jailors' rule, they thought,  
 Grew merciful, like a parent's sway. 935

I know not how, but we were free :  
 And Lionel sate alone with me,  
 As the carriage drove thro' the streets apace ;  
 And we looked upon each other's face ;  
 And the blood in our fingers intertwined 940  
 Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,  
 As the swift emotions went and came  
 Thro' the veins of each united frame.  
 So thro' the long long streets we past  
 Of the million-peopled City vast ; 945  
 Which is that desert, where each one

<sup>1</sup> There is a colon at *slept* in Shelley's edition, which is clearly wrong ; and I

doubt whether we should not read *Where* for *When* in line 932.

Seeks his mate yet is alone,  
Beloved and sought and mourned of none ;  
Until the clear blue sky was seen,  
And the grassy meadows bright and green, 950  
And then I sunk in his embrace,  
Enclosing there a mighty space  
Of love : and so we travelled on  
By woods, and fields of yellow flowers,  
And towns, and villages, and towers, 955  
Day after day of happy hours.  
It was the azure time of June,  
When the skies are deep in the stainless noon,  
And the warm and fitful breezes shake  
The fresh green leaves of the hedge-row briar, 960  
And there were odours then to make  
The very breath we did respire  
A liquid element, whereon  
Our spirits, like delighted things  
That walk the air on subtle wings, 965  
Floated and mingled far away,  
'Mid the warm winds of the sunny day.  
And when the evening star came forth  
Above the curve of the new bent moon,  
And light and sound ebbed from the earth, 970  
Like the tide of the full and weary sea  
To the depths of its tranquillity,  
Our natures to its own repose  
Did the earth's breathless sleep attune :  
Like flowers, which on each other close 975  
Their languid leaves when day-light's gone,  
We lay, till new emotions came,  
Which seemed to make each mortal frame  
One soul of interwoven flame,  
A life in life, a second birth 980  
In worlds diviner far than earth,  
Which, like two strains of harmony

That mingle in the silent sky  
Then slowly disunite, past by  
And left the tenderness of tears, 985  
A soft oblivion of all fears,  
A sweet sleep: so we travelled on  
Till we came to the home of Lionel,  
Among the mountains wild and lone,  
Beside the hoary western sea, 990  
Which near the verge of the echoing shore  
The massy forest shadowed o'er.

The ancient steward, with hair all hoar,  
As we alighted, wept to see  
His master changed so fearfully; 995  
And the old man's sobs did waken me  
From my dream of unremaining gladness;  
The truth flashed o'er me like quick madness  
When I looked, and saw that there was death  
On Lionel: yet day by day 1000  
He lived, till fear grew hope and faith,  
And in my soul I dared to say,  
Nothing so bright can pass away:  
Death is dark, and foul, and dull,  
But he is—O how beautiful! 1005  
Yet day by day he grew more weak,  
And his sweet voice, when he might speak,  
Which ne'er was loud, became more low;  
And the light which flashed through his waxen cheek  
Grew faint, as the rose-like hues which flow 1010  
From sunset o'er the Alpine snow:  
And death seemed not like death in him,  
For the spirit of life o'er every limb  
Lingered, a mist of sense and thought.  
When the summer wind faint odours brought 1015  
From mountain flowers, even as it passed

His cheek would change, as the noon-day sea  
Which the dying breeze sweeps fitfully.  
If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,  
You might see his colour come and go, 1020  
And the softest strain of music made  
Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade  
Amid the dew of his tender eyes;  
And the breath, with intermitting flow,  
Made his pale lips quiver and part. 1025  
You might hear the beatings of his heart,  
Quick, but not strong; and with my tresses  
When oft he playfully would bind  
In the bowers of mossy lonelineses  
His neck, and win me so to mingle 1030  
In the sweet depth of woven caresses,  
And our faint limbs were intertwined,  
Alas! the unquiet life did tingle  
From mine own heart through every vein,  
Like a captive in dreams of liberty, 1035  
Who beats the walls of his stony cell.  
But his, it seemed already free,  
Like the shadow of fire surrounding me!  
On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell  
That spirit as it passed, till soon, 1040  
As a frail cloud wandering o'er the moon,  
Beneath its light invisible,  
Is seen when it folds its grey wings again  
To alight on midnight's dusky plain,  
I lived and saw, and the gathering soul 1045  
Passed from beneath that strong controul,  
And I fell on a life which was sick with fear  
Of all the woe that now I bear.

Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,  
On a green and sea-girt promontory, 1050



Not far from where we dwelt, there stood  
 In record of a sweet sad story,  
 An altar and a temple bright  
 Circled by steps, and o'er the gate  
 Was sculptured, "To Fidelity;" 1055  
 And in the shrine an image sate,  
 All veiled: but there was seen the light  
 Of smiles, which faintly could express  
 A mingled pain and tenderness  
 Through that ethereal drapery. 1060  
 The left hand held the head, the right—  
 Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,  
 You might see the nerves quivering within—  
 Was forcing the point of a barbed dart  
 Into its side-convulsing heart. 1065  
 An unskilled hand, yet one informed  
 With genius, had the marble warmed  
 With that pathetic life. This tale  
 It told: A dog had from the sea,  
 When the tide was raging fearfully, 1070  
 Dragged Lionel's mother, weak and pale,  
 Then died beside her on the sand,  
 And she that temple thence had planned;  
 But it was Lionel's own hand  
 Had wrought the image. Each new moon 1075  
 That lady did, in this lone fane,  
 The rites of a religion sweet,  
 Whose god was in her heart and brain:  
 The seasons' loveliest flowers were strewn  
 On the marble floor beneath her feet, 1080  
 And she brought crowns of sea-buds white,  
 Whose odour is so sweet and faint,  
 And weeds, like branching chrysolite,<sup>1</sup>  
 Woven in devices fine and quaint,

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, *chrysolite*.



And tears from her brown eyes did stain 1085  
 The altar: need but look upon  
 That dying statue, fair and wan,  
 If tears should cease, to weep again:  
 And rare Arabian odours came,  
 Though the myrtle corses steaming thence 1090  
 From the hissing frankincense,  
 Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean foam,  
 Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome,  
 That ivory dome, whose azure night  
 With golden stars, like heaven, was bright 1095  
 O'er the split cedar's<sup>1</sup> pointed flame;  
 And the lady's harp would kindle there  
 The melody of an old air,  
 Softer than sleep; the villagers  
 Mixt their religion up with her's, 1100  
 And as they listened round, shed tears.

One eve he led me to this fane:  
 Daylight on its last purple cloud  
 Was lingering grey, and soon her strain  
 The nightingale began; now loud, 1105  
 Climbing in circles the windless sky,  
 Now dying music; suddenly  
 'Tis scattered in a thousand notes,  
 And now to the hushed ear it floats  
 Like field smells known in infancy, 1110  
 Then failing, soothes the air again.  
 We sate within that temple lone,  
 Pavilioned round with Parian stone:  
 His mother's harp stood near, and oft  
 I had awakened music soft 1115  
 Amid its wires: the nightingale  
 Was pausing in her heaven-taught tale:

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, *cedars*.

"Now drain the cup," said Lionel,  
 "Which the poet-bird has crowned so well  
 With the wine of her bright and liquid song! 1120  
 Heardst thou not sweet words among  
 That heaven-resounding minstrelsy?  
 Heardst thou not, that those who die  
 Awake in a world of ecstasy?<sup>1</sup>  
 That love, when limbs are interwoven, 1125  
 And sleep, when the night of life is cloven,  
 And thought, to the world's dim boundaries clinging,  
 And music, when one beloved is singing,  
 Is death? Let us drain right joyously  
 The cup which the sweet bird fills for me." 1130  
 He paused, and to my lips he bent  
 His own: like spirit his words went  
 Through all my limbs with the speed of fire;  
 And his keen eyes, glittering through mine,  
 Filled me with the flame divine, 1135  
 Which in their orbs was burning far,  
 Like the light of an unmeasured star,  
 In the sky of midnight dark and deep:  
 Yes, 'twas his soul that did inspire  
 Sounds, which my skill could ne'er awaken; 1140  
 And first, I felt my fingers sweep  
 The harp, and a long quivering cry  
 Burst from my lips in symphony:  
 The dusk and solid air was shaken,  
 As swift and swifter the notes came 1145  
 From my touch, that wandered like quick flame,  
 And from my bosom, labouring  
 With some unutterable thing:  
 The awful sound of my own voice made  
 My faint lips tremble, in some mood 1150  
 Of wordless thought Lionel stood

<sup>1</sup> Spelt *extacy* in Shelley's edition.

So pale, that even beside his cheek  
 The snowy column from its shade  
 Caught whiteness: yet his countenance  
 Raised upward, burned with radiance 1155  
 Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light,  
 Like the moon struggling through the night  
 Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did break  
 With beams that might not be confined.  
 I paused, but soon his gestures kindled 1160  
 New power, as by the moving wind  
 The waves are lifted, and my song  
 To low soft notes now changed and dwindled,  
 And from the twinkling wires among,  
 My languid fingers drew and flung 1165  
 Circles of life-dissolving<sup>1</sup> sound,  
 Yet faint: in aery rings they bound  
 My Lionel, who,<sup>2</sup> as every strain  
 Grew fainter but more sweet, his mien  
 Sunk with the sound relaxedly; 1170  
 And slowly now he turned to me,  
 As slowly faded from his face  
 That awful joy: with look serene  
 He was soon drawn to my embrace,  
 And my wild song then died away 1175  
 In murmurs: words I dare not say,<sup>3</sup>  
 We mixed, and on his lips mine fed  
 Till they methought felt still and cold:  
 "What is it with thee, love?" I said:

<sup>1</sup> No hyphen in Shelley's edition.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Rossetti omits *who*, puts a full point after *Lionel*, commences a fresh sentence with *As*, and accuses Shelley of using bad English, in terms which I prefer not to quote. Mr. Swinburne rebuts the charge on the ground that the construction, though licentious, is used by elder classical writers. But

it is open to question whether *mien* is nominative or accusative. Shelley may have meant to express that Lionel "sunk his mien," though it is more probable that the construction intended is that "Lionel's mien sunk."

<sup>3</sup> In the original the sense is subverted by the comma being at *words* instead of *say*.

No word, no look, no motion ! yes, 1180  
 There was a change, but spare to guess,  
 Nor let that moment's hope be told.  
 I looked, and knew that he was dead,  
 And fell, as the eagle on the plain  
 Falls when life deserts her brain, 1185  
 And the mortal lightning is veiled again.

O that I were now dead ! but such  
 (Did they not, love, demand too much,  
 Those dying murmurs ?) he forbade.<sup>1</sup>  
 O that I once again were mad ! 1190  
 And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,  
 For I would live to share thy woe.  
 Sweet boy, did I forget thee too ?  
 Alas, we know not what we do  
 When we speak words.

No memory more 1195

Is in my mind of that sea shore.  
 Madness came on me, and a troop  
 Of misty shapes did seem to sit  
 Beside me, on a vessel's poop,  
 And the clear north wind was driving it. 1200  
 Then I heard strange tongues, and saw strange flowers,  
 And the stars methought grew unlike ours,  
 And the azure sky and the stormless sea  
 Made me believe that I had died,  
 And waked in a world, which was to me 1205  
 Drear hell, though heaven to all beside :  
 Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,

<sup>1</sup> In these three lines I have adopted Mr. Rossetti's punctuation, which rescues from ruin a passage where there is unmistakable "error in the sense." In Shelley's edition the lines

stand thus :—

O that I were now dead ! but such  
 Did they not, love, demand too much  
 Those dying murmur's ? He forbade.

Whilst<sup>1</sup> animal life many long years  
 Had rescued from a chasm of tears ;  
 And when I woke, I wept to find 1210  
 That the same lady, bright and wise,  
 With silver locks and quick brown eyes,  
 The mother of my Lionel,  
 Had tended me in my distress,  
 And died some months before. Nor less 1215  
 Wonder, but far more peace and joy  
 Brought in that hour my lovely boy ;  
 For through that trance my soul had well  
 The impress of thy being kept ;  
 And if I waked, or if I slept, 1220  
 No doubt, though memory faithless be,  
 Thy image ever dwelt on me ;  
 And thus, O Lionel, like thee  
 Is our sweet child. 'Tis sure most strange  
 I knew not of so great a change, 1225  
 As that which gave him birth, who now  
 Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left  
 By will to me, and that of all  
 The ready lies of law bereft 1230

<sup>1</sup> This is certainly another instance of misprinting involving an "error in the sense"; but there are so many possible ways of reconstructing the two faulty lines on an equally Shelley-like pattern, that I do not venture to disturb the text at all. I have no doubt that *Whilst* in line 1208 and *Had* in line 1209 are both wrong, and that the sense intended by Shelley would be conveyed by

Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,  
*Which* animal life many long years  
 Rescued from a chasm of tears ;

the rescue of the "animal life" being evidently subsequent to the time of

hallucination, and contemporary with the "dead sleep",—because if, admitting *had* to be right, we make the rescue from the "chasm of tears" contemporary with the hallucination, we are met by the statement that the imaginary land of Helen's madness was "drear hell" to her, which is very much like *not* being rescued from a "chasm of tears." I find the whole line,

*Whilst* animal life many long years,

bafflingly unlike Shelley ; and it does not strike me as much more characteristic when we reduce it to sense by substituting *Which* for *Whilst*.

My child and me, might well befall.<sup>1</sup>  
 But let me think not of the scorn,  
 Which from the meanest I have borne,  
 When, for my child's belovèd sake,  
 I mixed with slaves, to vindicate 1235  
 The very laws themselves do make :  
 Let me not say scorn is my fate,  
 Lest I be proud, suffering the same  
 With those who live in deathless fame. 1239

She ceased.—“Lo, where red morning thro’ the woods<sup>2</sup>  
 Is burning o’er the dew ;” said Rosalind.  
 And with these words they rose, and towards the flood  
 Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves now wind  
 With equal steps and fingers intertwined :  
 Thence to a lonely dwelling, where the shore 1245  
 Is shadowed with steep<sup>3</sup> rocks, and cypresses  
 Cleave with their dark green cones the silent skies,  
 And with their shadows the clear depths below,  
 And where a little terrace from its bowers,  
 Of blooming myrtle and faint lemon-flowers, 1250  
 Scatters its sense-dissolving fragrance o’er  
 The liquid marble of the windless lake ;  
 And where the agèd forest’s limbs look hoar,  
 Under the leaves which their green garments make,  
 They come : ’tis Helen’s home, and clean and white, 1255  
 Like one which tyrants spare on our own land

<sup>1</sup> As this passage is punctuated in Shelley’s and Mrs. Shelley’s editions, namely with the comma at *bereft* instead of *me, bereft* is intransitive and *befall* transitive, so that the sense would stand—“it might well befall my child and me that the ready lies of law bereft of all” ; but the sense is doubtless—“it might well befall that the ready lies of law bereft my child and me of all.”

<sup>2</sup> So in Shelley’s and all authorita-

tive editions ; but Mr. Rossetti reads *wood* for *woods*, which, I have little doubt, is a safe emendation. As however the mere absence of a rhyme does not condemn a passage according to the standard of this poem, and *woods* is intrinsically as good as *wood*, I leave it as I find it.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Shelley omits *steep*, no doubt accidentally, though, by accenting the *ed* of *shadowed*, the line still reads as a full line, without the word *steep*.



In some such solitude, its casements bright  
Shone through their vine-leaves in the morning sun,  
And even within 'twas scarce like Italy.  
And when she saw how all things there were planned, 1260  
As in an English home, dim memory  
Disturbed poor Rosalind: she stood as one  
Whose mind is where his body cannot be,  
Till Helen led her where her child yet slept,  
And said, "Observe, that brow was Lionel's, 1265  
Those lips were his, and so he ever kept  
One arm in sleep, pillowing his head with it.  
You cannot see his eyes, they are two wells  
Of liquid love: let us not wake him yet."  
But Rosalind could bear no more, and wept 1270  
A shower of burning tears, which fell upon  
His face, and so his opening lashes shone  
With tears unlike his own, as he did leap  
In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together 1275  
Thenceforth, changed in all else, yet friends again,  
Such as they were, when o'er the mountain heather  
They wandered in their youth, through sun and rain.  
And after many years, for human things  
Change even like the ocean and the wind, 1280  
Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,  
And in their circle thence some visitings  
Of joy 'mid their new calm would intervene:  
A lovely child she was, of looks serene,  
And motions which o'er things indifferent shed 1285  
The grace and gentleness from whence they came.  
And Helen's boy grew with her, and they fed  
From the same flowers of thought, until each mind  
Like springs which mingle in one flood became,  
And in their union soon their parents saw 1290



The shadow of the peace denied to them.  
 And Rosalind, for when the living stem  
 Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall,  
 Died ere her time ; and with deep grief and awe  
 The pale survivors followed her remains 1295  
 Beyond the region of dissolving rains,  
 Up the cold mountain she was wont to call  
 Her tomb ; and on Chiavenna's precipice  
 They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,  
 Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun, 1300  
 Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun,  
 The last, when it had sunk ; and thro' the night  
 The charioteers of Arctos wheelèd round  
 Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,  
 Whose sad inhabitants each year would come, 1305  
 With willing steps climbing that rugged height,  
 And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound  
 With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's despite,  
 Filled the froze air with unaccustomed light:  
 Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom 1310  
 Of one friend left, adorned that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,  
 Whose sufferings too were less, death slower led  
 Into the peace of his dominion cold :  
 She died among her kindred, being old. 1315  
 And know, that if love die not in the dead  
 As in the living, none of mortal kind  
 Are blest, as now Helen and Rosalind.

## LINES

WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS,

OCTOBER, 1818.

---

MANY a green isle needs must be  
In the deep wide sea of misery,  
Or the mariner, worn and wan,  
Never thus could voyage on  
Day and night, and night and day,  
Drifting on his dreary way,  
With the solid darkness black  
Closing round his vessel's track ;  
Whilst above the sunless sky,  
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,  
And behind the tempest fleet  
Hurries on with lightning feet,  
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,  
Till the ship has almost drank  
Death from the o'er-brimming deep ;  
And sinks down, down, like that sleep  
When the dreamer seems to be  
Weltering through eternity ;  
And the dim low line before

5

10

15

Of a dark and distant shore 20  
 Still recedes, as ever still  
 Longing with divided will,  
 But no power to seek or shun,  
 He is ever drifted on  
 O'er the unreposing wave 25  
 To the haven of the grave.  
 What, if there no friends will greet;  
 What, if there no heart will meet  
 His with love's impatient beat;  
 Wander wheresoe'er he may, 30  
 Can he dream before that day  
 To find refuge from distress  
 In friendship's smile, in love's caress?  
 Then 'twill wreak him little woe  
 Whether such there be or no: 35  
 Senseless is the breast, and cold,  
 Which relenting love would fold;  
 Bloodless are the veins and chill  
 Which the pulse of pain did fill;  
 Every little living nerve 40  
 That from bitter words did swerve  
 Round the tortured lips and brow,  
 Are like sapless leaflets now<sup>1</sup>  
 Frozen upon December's bough.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rossetti substitutes for this line

Is like a sapless leaflet now;  
 and says in a note that he has "rescued these lines (with some consciousness of audacity) from the annoying grammatical solecism of the original—

'Every little living nerve  
 Are like sapless leaflets now.'"

Mr. Swinburne says (*Essays and Studies*, pp. 228-9)—"If the editor finds the license of such a phrase . . . too 'annoying' to be endured by a scholastic sense of propriety, the annoyance is far keener which will be inflicted on

others by his substituted reading . . . Shelley has indulged in a loose and obsolete construction which may or may not be defensible; I should not at the present day permit it to myself, or condone it in another; and had the editor been engaged in the revision of a schoolboy's theme, he would certainly have done right to correct such a phrase, and as certainly would not have done wrong to add such further correction as he might deem desirable; but the task here undertaken is not exactly comparable to the revision of a schoolboy's theme."

On the beach of a northern sea 43  
 Which tempests shake eternally,  
 As once the wretch there lay to sleep,  
 Lies a solitary heap,  
 One white skull and seven dry bones,  
 On the margin of the stones, 50  
 Where a few grey rushes stand,  
 Boundaries of the sea and land :  
 Nor is heard one voice of wail  
 But the sea-mews, as they sail  
 O'er the billows of the gale ; 55  
 Or the whirlwind up and down  
 Howling, like a slaughtered town,  
 When a king in glory rides  
 Through the pomp of fratricides :  
 Those unburied bones around 60  
 There is many a mournful sound ;  
 There is no lament for him,  
 Like a sunless vapour, dim,  
 Who once clothed with life and thought  
 What now moves nor murmurs not. 65

Aye, many flowering islands lie  
 In the waters of wide Agony :  
 To such a one this morn was led,  
 My bark by soft winds piloted :  
 'Mid the mountains Euganean 70  
 I stood listening to the pæan,  
 With which the legioned rooks did hail  
 The sun's uprise majestic ;  
 Gathering round with wings all hoar,  
 Thro' the dewy mist they soar 75  
 Like grey shades, till the<sup>1</sup> eastern heaven

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, *the* is contracted into *th'*, to bring the line with- in someone's idea of regularity ; but Mrs. Shelley restores *the*. I say "re-

Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,  
 Flecked with fire and azure, lie  
 In the unfathomable sky,  
 So their plumes of purple grain, 80  
 Starred with drops of golden rain,  
 Gleam above the sunlight woods,  
 As in silent multitudes  
 On the morning's fitful gale  
 Thro' the broken mist they sail, 85  
 And the vapours cloven and gleaming  
 Follow down the dark steep streaming,  
 Till all is bright, and clear, and still,  
 Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea 90  
 The waveless plain of Lombardy,  
 Bounded by the vaporous air,  
 Islanded by cities fair ;  
 Underneath day's azure eyes  
 Ocean's nursling, Venice lies, 95  
 A peopled labyrinth of walls,  
 Amphitrite's destined halls,  
 Which her hoary sire now paves  
 With his blue and beaming waves.  
 Lo ! the sun upsprings behind, 100  
 Broad, red, radiant, half reclined  
 On the level quivering line  
 Of the waters crystalline<sup>1</sup>;  
 And before that chasm of light,  
 As within a furnace bright, 105  
 Column, tower, and dome, and spire,

stores," because I cannot suppose for a moment that the contraction was Shelley's,—the line being quite in his manner without it. I do not know who saw the volume through the press ; but, from the general scarcity

of Shelley's favourite item of punctuation (the pause), I suspect it was Peacock, who, I am told by a friend of his, cut out quantities of Shelley's pauses when revising for press.

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, *chrySTALLine*.

Shine like obelisks of fire,  
 Pointing with inconstant motion  
 From the altar of dark ocean  
 To the sapphire-tinted skies; 110  
 As the flames of sacrifice  
 From the marble shrines did rise,  
 As to pierce the dome of gold  
 Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt<sup>1</sup> City, thou hast been 115  
 Ocean's child, and then his queen;  
 Now is come a darker day,  
 And thou soon must be his prey,  
 If the power that raised thee here  
 Hallow so thy watery bier. 120  
 A less drear ruin than than now,  
 With thy conquest-branded brow  
 Stooping to the slave of slaves  
 From thy throne, among the waves  
 Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew 125  
 Flies, as once before it flew,  
 O'er thine isles depopulate,  
 And all is in its antient state,  
 Save where many a palace gate  
 With green sea-flowers overgrown 130  
 Like a rock of ocean's own,  
 Topples o'er the abandoned sea  
 As the tides change sullenly.

<sup>1</sup> As to this beautiful epithet *sun-girt*, I entirely agree with Mr. Swinburne, who says Mr. Palgrave's proposal (*Golden Treasury*,—Notes), to substitute *sea-girt*, "may look plausible, but the new epithet is feeble, inadequate, inaccurate. Venice is not a sea-girt city; it is interlaced and interwoven with sea, but not girdled; pierced

through with water, but not ringed about. Seen by noon from the Eugeanean heights, clothed as with the very and visible glory of Italy, it might seem to Shelley a city girdled with the sunlight, as some Nereid with the arms of the sun-god."—*Essays and Studies*, p. 199.



The fisher on his watery way,  
 Wandering at the close of day, 135  
 Will spread his sail and seize his oar  
 Till he pass the gloomy shore,  
 Lest thy dead should, from their sleep  
 Bursting o'er the starlight deep,  
 Lead a rapid masque of death 140  
 O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold  
 Quivering through aerial gold,  
 As I now behold them here,  
 Would imagine not they were 145  
 Sepulchres, where human forms,  
 Like pollution-nourished worms  
 To the corpse of greatness cling,  
 Murdered, and now mouldering :  
 But if Freedom should awake 150  
 In her omnipotence, and shake  
 From the Celtic Anarch's hold  
 All the keys of dungeons cold,  
 Where a hundred cities lie  
 Chained like thee, ingloriously, 155  
 Thou and all thy sister band  
 Might adorn this sunny land,  
 Twining memories of old time  
 With new virtues more sublime ;  
 If not, perish thou and they, 160  
 Clouds which stain truth's rising day  
 By her sun consumed away,  
 Earth can spare ye : while like flowers,  
 In the waste of years and hours,  
 From your dust new nations spring 165  
 With more kindly blossoming.



Perish—let, there only be<sup>1</sup>  
 Floating o'er thy heartless sea  
 As the garment of thy sky  
 Clothes the world immortally, 170  
 One remembrance, more sublime  
 Than the tattered pall of time,  
 Which scarce hides thy visage wan ;—  
 That a tempest-cleaving Swan  
 Of the songs<sup>2</sup> of Albion, 175  
 Driven from his ancestral streams  
 By the might of evil dreams,  
 Found a nest in thee ; and Ocean  
 Welcomed him with such emotion  
 That its joy grew his, and sprung 180  
 From his lips like music flung  
 O'er a mighty thunder-fit  
 Chastening terror :—what though yet  
 Poesy's unfailing River,  
 Which thro' Albion winds for ever 185  
 Lashing with melodious wave  
 Many a sacred Poet's grave,  
 Mourn its latest nursling fled ?  
 What though thou with all thy dead  
 Scarce can for this fame repay 190

<sup>1</sup> This passage (lines 167 to 205) seems to have been an after-thought. Mr. Frederick Locker possesses a copy of *Rosalind and Helen*, &c., containing the MS. interpolation sent after the poem had gone to the publisher ; and with his kind permission I have followed that in preference to the printed text. The variations, though numerous, are very slight, being confined to matters of pointing and "capitalling." Shelley heads the passage thus :  
 "After the lines

From thy dust shall nations spring  
 With more kindly blossoming."

Doubtless he quoted from memory, and had no intention of changing

*your* to *thy*, and *new* to *shall*, in the first line of the couplet.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot but think this word should be *sons*, not *songs*. It has always, as far as I am aware, been printed *songs* ; and it certainly is *songs* in Mr. Locker's MS. This, however, is somewhat hastily written ; and Shelley might easily have made such a clerical mistake as I suspect ; but in the absence of any other MS. the text must of course remain as it is,—the expression *a swan of the songs of Albion* being conceivable, and indeed being considered, by some critics with whom I have discussed this point, more probable than *a swan of the sons of Albion*.

Aught thine own? oh, rather say  
 Though thy sins and slaveries foul  
 Overcloud a sunlike soul?  
 As the ghost of Homer clings  
 Round Scamander's wasting springs; 195  
 As divinest Shakespeare's might  
 Fills Avon and the world with light  
 Like omniscient power which he  
 Imaged 'mid mortality;  
 As the love from Petrarch's urn, 200  
 Yet amid yon hills doth burn,  
 A quenchless lamp by which the heart  
 Sees things unearthly;—so thou art  
 Mighty spirit—so shall be  
 The City that did refuge thee. 205

Lo, the sun floats up the sky  
 Like thought-wingèd Liberty,  
 Till the universal light  
 Seems to level plain and height;  
 From the sea a mist has spread, 210  
 And the beams of morn lie dead  
 On the towers of Venice now,  
 Like its glory long ago.  
 By the skirts of that grey cloud  
 Many-domèd Padua proud 215  
 Stands, a peopled solitude,  
 'Mid the harvest-shining plain,<sup>1</sup>  
 Where the peasant heaps his grain  
 In the garner of his foe,  
 And the milk-white oxen slow 220

<sup>1</sup> There is no hyphen to connect *harvest* and *shining* in Shelley's edition; and it is possible that he inadvertently omitted it, as he often did; but I have supplied it because, as the line was

originally printed, it might mean that Padua stood shining plainly amid the harvest, whereas I take it Shelley meant that she stood amid the plain which was shining with harvest.

With the purple vintage strain,  
 Heaped upon the creaking wain,  
 That the brutal Celt may swill  
 Drunken sleep with savage will ;  
 And the sickle to the sword 225  
 Lies unchanged, though many a lord,  
 Like a weed whose shade is poison,  
 Overgrows this region's foison,<sup>1</sup>  
 Sheaves of whom are ripe to come  
 To destruction's harvest home : 230  
 Men must reap the things they sow,  
 Force from force must ever flow,  
 Or worse ; but 'tis a bitter woe  
 That love or reason cannot change  
 The despot's rage, the slave's revenge. 235

Padua, thou within whose walls  
 Those mute guests at festivals,  
 Son and Mother, Death and Sin,  
 Played at dice for Ezzelin,  
 Till Death cried, " I win, I win ! " 240  
 And Sin cursed to lose the wager,  
 But Death promised, to assuage her,  
 That he would petition for  
 Her to be made Vice-Emperor,  
 When the destined years were o'er, 245  
 Over all between the Po  
 And the eastern Alpine snow,  
 Under the mighty Austrian.  
 Sin smiled so as Sin only can,  
 And since that time, aye, long before, 250  
 Both have ruled from shore to shore,  
 That incestuous pair, who follow  
 Tyrants as the sun the swallow,

<sup>1</sup> Printed *foizon* in Shelley's edition.

As Repentance follows Crime,  
And as changes follow Time.

255

In thine halls the lamp of learning,  
Padua, now no more is burning;  
Like a meteor, whose wild way  
Is lost over the grave of day,  
It gleams betrayed and to betray :  
Once remotest nations came  
To adore that sacred flame,  
When it lit not many a hearth  
On this cold and gloomy earth :  
Now new fires from antique light  
Spring beneath the wide world's might ;  
But their spark lies dead in thee,  
Trampled out by tyranny.

260

265

As the Norway woodman quells,  
In the depth of piny dells,  
One light flame among the brakes,  
While the boundless forest shakes,  
And its mighty trunks are torn  
By the fire thus lowly born :  
The spark beneath his feet is dead,  
He starts to see the flames it fed  
Howling through the darkened sky  
With a myriad tongues victoriously,  
And sinks down in fear : so thou,  
O Tyranny,<sup>1</sup> beholdest now  
Light around thee, and thou hearest  
The loud flames ascend, and fearest :  
Grovel on the earth : aye, hide  
In the dust thy purple pride !

270

275

280

Noon descends around me now :

285

<sup>1</sup> *Tyranny* with a small *t* in Shelley's edition.

'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,  
 When a soft and purple mist  
 Like a vaporous amethyst,  
 Or an air-dissolvèd star  
 Mingling light and fragrance, far 290  
 From the curved horizon's bound  
 To the point of heaven's profound,  
 Fills the overflowing sky ;  
 And the plains that silent lie  
 Underneath, the leaves unsodden 295  
 Where the infant frost has trodden  
 With his morning-wingèd feet,  
 Whose bright print is gleaming yet ;  
 And the red and golden vines,  
 Piercing with their trellised lines 300  
 The rough, dark-skirted wilderness ;  
 The dun and bladed grass no less,  
 Pointing from this hoary tower  
 In the windless air ; the flower  
 Glimmering at my feet ; the line 305  
 Of the olive-sandalled Apennine  
 In the south dimly islanded ;  
 And the Alps, whose snows are spread  
 High between the clouds and sun ;  
 And of living things each one ; 310  
 And my spirit which so long  
 Darkened this swift stream of song,  
 Interpenetrated lie  
 By the glory of the sky :  
 Be it love, light, harmony, 315  
 Odour, or the soul of all  
 Which from heaven like dew doth fall,  
 Or the mind which feeds this verse  
 Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon 320

Autumn's evening meets me soon,

Leading the infantine moon,

And that one star, which to her

Almost seems to minister

Half the crimson light she brings 325

From the sunset's radiant springs :

And the soft dreams of the morn,

(Which like wingèd winds had borne

To that silent isle, which lies

'Mid remembered agonies, 330

The frail bark of this lone being,)

Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,

And its ancient pilot, Pain,

Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be 335

In the sea of life and agony :

Other spirits float and flee

O'er that gulph : even now, perhaps,

On some rock the wild wave wraps,

With folded wings they waiting sit 340

For my bark, to pilot it

To some calm and blooming cove,

Where for me, and those I love,

May a windless bower be built,

Far from passion, pain, and guilt, 345

In a dell 'mid lawny hills,

Which the wild sea-murmur fills,

And soft sunshine, and the sound

Of old forests echoing round,

And the light and smell divine 350

Of all flowers that breathe and shine :

We may live so happy there,

That the spirits of the air,



Envyng us, may even entice  
 To our healing paradise 355  
 The polluting multitude;  
 But their rage would be subdued  
 By that clime divine and calm,  
 And the winds whose wings rain balm  
 On the uplifted soul, and leaves 360  
 Under which the bright sea heaves;  
 While each breathless interval  
 In their whisperings musical  
 The inspired soul supplies  
 With its own deep melodies, 365  
 And the love which heals all strife  
 Circling, like the breath of life,  
 All things in that sweet abode  
 With its own mild brotherhood:  
 They, not it would change; and soon 370  
 Every sprite beneath the moon  
 Would repent its envy vain,  
 And the earth grow young again.



# HYMN

TO

## INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY.<sup>1</sup>

---

1.

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power  
Floats tho' unseen amongst<sup>2</sup> us,—visiting  
This various world with as inconstant wing  
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—  
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,

<sup>1</sup> This poem was published in *The Examiner* for 19 January, 1817 (No. 473), having been, as the Editor remarks, "originally announced under the signature of the *Elfin Knight*." In the meantime the authorship had become known to the editor; and the poem was duly signed, on its appearance, with the name PERCY B. SHELLEY. I suspect that Shelley read a proof of this poem before it appeared in *The Examiner*, or else that it was pretty correctly printed from a very careful copy. The punctuation is wholly different in system from that of the version in the *Rosalind and Helen* volume; and, referring to the remark made in a former note (p. 57) as to Peacock's practice of removing the pauses so constantly used by Shelley, it should be observed that this *Hymn*, as printed in *The Examiner*, has no less than twenty-one pauses in it, while the other version has not a single

one left, the whole being replaced by more orthodox points. Moreover Shelley was in England when the *Examiner* version appeared, while, from the preface to the *Rosalind* volume, it would seem that he did not even know the *Hymn* was to be in that volume,—so that he is not likely to have prepared that version. On the whole therefore, I think it safer to give the earlier version, which presents no important difference from the other, except in this matter of punctuation, and in the few particulars specified in the following notes. Mrs. Shelley tells us in her note on Poems of 1816 that the *Hymn* "was conceived during his voyage round the Lake [of Geneva] with Lord Byron."

<sup>2</sup> In the version of 1819, *among*, instead of *amongst*,—one point in which that version seems to me preferable to the other,—more Shelley-like in instinct for sound.

It visits with inconstant glance  
 Each human heart and countenance ;  
 Like hues and harmonies of evening,—  
 Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—  
 Like memory of music fled,—  
 Like aught that for its grace may be  
 Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

## 2.

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost<sup>1</sup> consecrate  
 With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon  
 Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone ?  
 Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,  
 This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate ?  
 Ask why the sunlight not for ever  
 Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,  
 Why aught should fail and fade that once is shewn,  
 Why fear and dream<sup>2</sup> and death and birth  
 Cast on the daylight of this earth  
 Such gloom,—why man has such a scope  
 For love and hate, despondency and hope ?

## 3.

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever  
 To sage or poet these responses given—  
 Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,  
 Remain the records of their vain endeavour,  
 Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,  
 From all we hear and all we see,  
 Doubt, chance, and mutability.  
 Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,

<sup>1</sup> In *The Examiner*, *dost* ; but *doth* in the *Rosalind and Helen* volume.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Garnett tells me an interest-

ing MS. variation in this line,—*care and pain for fear and dream*,—is shewn by Sir Percy Shelley's MS.

Or music by the night wind sent,  
 Thro' strings of some still instrument,  
 Or moonlight on a midnight stream,  
 Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

4.<sup>1</sup>

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart  
 And come, for some uncertain moments lent.  
 Man were immortal, and omnipotent,  
 Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,  
 Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.  
 Thou messenger of sympathies,  
 That wax and wane in lovers'<sup>2</sup> eyes—  
 Thou—that to human thought art<sup>3</sup> nourishment,  
 Like darkness to a dying flame!  
 Depart not as thy shadow came,  
 Depart not—lest the grave should be,  
 Like life and fear, a dark reality.

## 5.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped  
 Thro' many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,  
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing  
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.  
 I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed,  
 I was not heard—I saw them not—  
 When musing deeply on the lot  
 Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing  
 All vital things that wake to bring  
 News of birds and blossoming,—

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Garnett tells me this stanza is not in the original draft.

<sup>2</sup> In both the *Examiner* version and that of 1819, this word is *lover's* in-

stead of *lovers'*.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Rosalind and Helen* version, we read *are for art*.

Sudden, thy shadow fell on me ;  
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!<sup>1</sup>

## 6.

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers  
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow ?  
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now  
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours  
Each from his voiceless grave : they have in visioned bowers  
Of studious zeal or love's<sup>2</sup> delight  
Outwatched with me the envious night—  
They know that never joy illumed my brow  
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free  
This world from its dark slavery,  
That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,  
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Spelt *extacy* in both versions.

<sup>2</sup> We read *loves* instead of *love's*, both in the version printed in *The Examiner*, and in that published with *Rosalind and Helen*.

<sup>3</sup> There can be but little doubt that these two stanzas (5 and 6) have reference to the same awakening of Shelley's spirit to its sublime mission, referred to in another passage of like autobiographic value, namely stanzas 3, 4, and 5 of the Dedication to *Laon and Cythna* (pp. 102 and 103). In a note on those stanzas the question whether the awakening was at Eton or at Brentford is referred to ; and whichever be the correct version as to period and locality in that case is also correct as to this. The passage in Sir John Rennie's Autobiography alluded to there seems to me to correspond still more strikingly with these two stanzas of the *Hymn* than with the version of the same spiritual situation in the Dedication ; and I have therefore reserved the following extract from the Autobiography as more fitting to be given here than there :—" During the time that I was

there the most remarkable scholar was the celebrated poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was then about twelve or thirteen (as far as I can remember), and even at that early age exhibited considerable poetical talent, accompanied by a violent and extremely excitable temper, which manifested itself in all kinds of eccentricities. ... His imagination was always roving upon something romantic and extraordinary, such as spirits, fairies, fighting, volcanoes, &c., and he not unfrequently astonished his school-fellows by blowing up the boundary palings of the playground with gun-powder, also the lid of his desk in the middle of schooltime, to the great surprise of Dr. Greenlaw himself and the whole school. In fact, at times he was considered to be almost upon the borders of insanity ; yet with all this, when treated with kindness, he was very amiable, noble, high-spirited, and generous ; he used to write verse, English and Latin, with considerable facility, and attained a high position in the school before he left for Eton where I understand, he was equally, if not

## 7.

The day becomes more solemn and serene  
 When noon is past—there is a harmony  
 In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,  
 Which thro' the summer is not heard or seen,  
 As if it could not be, as if it had not been !  
 Thus let thy power, which like the truth  
 Of nature on my passive youth  
 Descended, to my onward life supply  
 Its calm—to one who worships thee,  
 And every form containing thee,<sup>1</sup>  
 Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind  
 To fear himself, and love all human kind.

more, extraordinary and eccentric." In reading this beside the two stanzas in the *Hymn*, allowance must of course be made for the difference between a poet's conception of incidents in his sensitive and persecuted boyhood, and another man's conception of those same incidents as seen by a school-fellow, who probably, like most of the schoolfellows that any of us can recall, would have no sympathy whatever with a boy like Shelley. The dryly recorded fact that he wrote "verse, English and Latin, with considerable facility," is probably the best corroborative evidence we can get of that vowed service to the spirit of Intellectual Beauty recorded by the poet in the words

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers  
 To thee and thine.

<sup>1</sup> The repetition here of the word *thee*, instead of finding a rhyme, is highly significant of deliberate intention, and certainly tends to confirm the view expressed in some of the notes on analogous and similar instances throughout *Laon and Cythna*, that it is not safe to regard such cases as "metric irregularities." In this case there could have been no possible difficulty (as there sometimes would be in the complex stanzas of *Laon and Cythna*); and I should look upon it as almost certain that here, at all events, the repetition of the word was well considered with regard to effect.



SONNET.<sup>1</sup>

## OZYMANDIAS.

I MET a traveller from an antique land  
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
 The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:  
 And on the pedestal these words appear:  
 "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"  
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

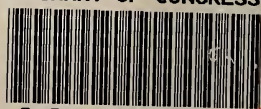
<sup>1</sup> In Mr. Middleton's *Shelley and His Writings* (Vol. II, p. 71) we are told that Shelley, Keats, and Leigh Hunt "tried to excel each other in writing a sonnet on the Nile;" and he adds that Shelley's *Ozymandias* "was one of these." He gives no authority for this latter statement; and I presume it rests upon the fact that Lord Houghton, in his *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats*, appends the *Ozymandias* Sonnet, with those of Keats and Hunt, to the letter in which Keats recounts the

friendly strife. Lord Houghton (Vol. I, p. 99) merely introduces the three Sonnets with the words, "These are the three sonnets on the Nile here alluded to, and very characteristic they are." At all events it is to be remarked that this is *not* a sonnet on the Nile, and that, among the Leigh Hunt MSS. placed at my disposal by Mr. Townshend Mayer, there is a sonnet in Shelley's handwriting addressed "To the Nile,"—which will duly appear in this edition of his works.





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